

## Editor's Foreword

This issue of the *Journal* features three different types of reviews pertinent to the field of near-death studies.

The first review places the field of near-death studies in the broader historical context of the field of transpersonal psychology. Updating his presentation on this topic at the 2006 International Association for Near-Death Studies conference held at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, retired Houston psychology professor Ken Vincent, Ed.D., describes how the questions of the existence of God and of an afterlife have been addressed across three historical eras. Including his commentary in this Guest Editorial, Dr. Vincent concludes that although scientific inquiry into these questions cannot provide definitive proof of either phenomenon, they definitely point to the existence of both.

In the second review, University of Virginia research psychologist Carlos Alvarado, Ph.D., marries the literature of the distant past with the most up-to-date technological resources of the present. Through Google Books, he reports, readers seeking information from hard-to-find or out-of-print historical resources can access many of these cost-free online. To illustrate the value of these resources, he includes passages of likely interest to *Journal* readers. For me, many of these passages revealed the sources of ideas still discussed today in the near-death literature and underscored how, regarding such ideas, there actually is “very little new under the sun.”

I recently returned from the 2010 conference of the Association for Death Education and Counseling. In the shuttle to the airport, I sat next to a man who told the story of an after-death communication experience. His teenage son, who had displayed a lifelong fascination with birds of prey, had died many years before in a car accident. As the mourners gathered in the family's backyard for a balloon release, a red-tailed hawk swooped down on the group – a phenomenon the man had not seen in his yard either before or since. I believe this experience would, in the parlance of Robert Perry, constitute a *sign*. In the third review of this *Journal* issue, University of Virginia psychiatrist Bruce Greyson, M.D., reviews Perry's book, *Signs: A New Approach to Coincidence, Synchronicity, Guidance, Life Purpose, and God's Plan*.

Dr. Greyson examines many of Perry's assertions with views that, I believe, show Perry's ideas to be potentially compatible with virtually any belief system.

In the process of editing this issue, I found each of these reviews rich in its own unique way. It is my hope that you also will feel enriched in the reading of them.

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